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Message Text

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73
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-06

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00

USIA-15 EB-07 IO-11 SS-15 NSC-05 /088 W
---------- 125606
R 092223Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2889

UNCLAS MEXICO 1677

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR MX GT
SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN EARTHQUAKE: SURE ENOUGH, WE'RE TO BLAME

1. SEMI-OFFICIAL EL NACIONAL FEB. 9 RAN BOTH AN EDITORIAL AND AN OP-ED COLUMN SUGGESTING U.S. RESPONSIBILITY, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, FOR DISASTER IN GUATEMALA.

2. EDITORIAL ARGUED THAT HELP FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY WEALTHY NATIONS, WAS A "DUTY" RATHER THAN AN EXPRESSION OF GENEROSITY. DISASTER WAS NOT MERELY WORK OF NATURE: AS IN BANGLADESH FLOODS AND AFRICAN DROUGHTS, EFFECTS WERE MULTIPLIED BY POVERTY AND RESULTS FAR MORE GRIEVIOUS THAN EVER WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE IN WEALTHY COUNTRIES. THUS AID TO GUATEMALA HAS TO BE VIEWED AS DUTY OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, IN SAME SPIRIT AS DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL COOPERATION (AND IN CONTRASTS TO OBSCENE EXPENDITURES ON ARMS AND ON MAINTAINING POLITICAL HEGEMONIES).

3. AND BY THE WAY, SAYS NACIONAL, ARGUMENT THAT NATURE IS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE LOOKS DOUBLY DUBIOUS IN LIGHT OF REPEATED UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTS. NO ONE HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO DENY CATEGORICALLY THAT THESE TESTS ALTER GEOLOGY AND CLIMATE, WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND "MANY AUTHORITATIVE SPOKESMEN" HAVE WARNED OF SUCH EFFECTS.

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4. NACIONAL COLUMNIST JOSE ROSSO, MEANWHILE -- ALTHOUGH

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SATISFIED THAT THE SAN DREAS FAULT WAS THE CAUSE OF THE QUAKE -- ALSO ARGUES LINE THAT GUATEMALA HAS SUFFERED SO SEVERLY BECAUSE OUTSIDERS HISTORICALLY KEPT IT POOR AND WEAK. ROSSO ASSERTS THAT, AFTER HAVING "SUCKED THE BLOOD OF THE NOBLE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE FOR SO LONG", THE TRANSNATIONAL FRUIT COMPANIES ARE NOWHERE TO BE SEEN AMONG THOSE AIDING THE QUAKE'S VICTIMS. HE WARNS FINALLY THAT MEXICO TOO COULD SUFFER FROM SAN ADREAS SLIPPAGE AND COULD EXPECT NO HELP FROM TRANSNATIONALS WHICH HAVE TAKEN SO MUCH OF ITS WEALTH.
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